

VZCZCXRO4404

OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHSI #0841/01 1211419

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 011419Z MAY 09

FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1497

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0213

RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4831

RUEHUNV/UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 4028

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 000841

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/01/2019

TAGS: PREL MOPS KBTS RS GG

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: EUMM CONFIRMS COMPLIANCE WITH MOU ON
MILITARY MOVEMENTS

REF: A. TBILISI 171

1B. OSCE MISSION TO GEORGIA DAILY PATROL REPORT FOR
29 APRIL 2009

Classified By: Amb. John F. Tefft for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary and comment. The EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) released a public statement April 28 announcing the automatic renewal of its MOU with the Georgian Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Georgia's continued compliance with its provisions.

The statement notes that the EUMM has not been able to substantiate any of the numerous allegations of Georgia's violations of the MOU; the EUMM informed post that it released the statement to respond not only to these allegations, but also to Russian concerns that the MOU's validity was about to expire. The EUMM and OSCE have observed numerous trenches and other positions dug by the Georgian military in recent weeks along the main east-west highway, but no equipment is installed in any of the positions. The MOD stated these are defensive positions only, and the EUMM and OSCE have determined this is the case.

This fairly categorical statement will be useful in rebutting continued unfounded allegations of Georgia's alleged buildup and putting the onus for reducing tensions on the other side of the boundaries. End summary and comment.

12. (SBU) The EUMM's MOU with the MOD was signed on January 26, 2009 (see ref A) and contains a provision that it will automatically be renewed every three months unless one of the sides decides to withdraw. Since neither side did so, the EUMM released its statement April 28 announcing the automatic continuation of the agreement (see paragraph 5 for text). The MOD released a similar statement, also on April 28 (see paragraph 6). EUMM Head of Mission Hansjoerg Haber told a group of diplomats April 30 that the EUMM decided to release the statement partly in response to concerns Russia has raised with EUMM that the validity of the MOU would expire after the initial three-month period. Head of the MOD's Analytical Department David Nardai told PolOff and Acting DATT, also on April 30, that the MOD sees no reason to change any of the MOU's provisions and expects to continue to maintain the agreement into the foreseeable future.

13. (C) The EUMM and OSCE have both observed in recent weeks the digging of trenches and emplacements for military equipment, such as tanks, at various locations along the main east-west highway south of South Ossetia. The two organizations have not observed any military personnel or equipment occupying the positions. On April 29, for example, OSCE monitors observed a "500-meter-long system of unoccupied trenches, foxholes, earthworks and armored vehicle positions between Mokhisi and Agara" (ref B). The same patrol observed similar positions west of Agara. These locations are straight west from Gori; the organizations have observed

similar positions east of Gori as well, on either side of the highway, but not near the South Ossetian administrative boundary. Nardaia explained that the positions are part of Georgia's defense plan and are designed to allow Georgia to take up defensive positions in case of another attack on Georgia. He stressed that they are defensive positions only, noting that it would be difficult to move positions dug into the ground for offensive purposes. At his meeting with diplomats, Haber said the EUMM has determined that the positions are indeed defensive in nature; OSCE monitors have made the same determination.

COMMENT: Saying Georgia is Building Up Doesn't Make it True

¶4. (C) Haber was almost embarrassed to note the statement's very "flattering" assessment of the MOD's compliance, but he said he and his colleagues has been genuinely impressed with the level of the MOD's cooperation. The sweeping nature of the finding that, of all the numerous allegations of Georgian violations, the EUMM has not been able to substantiate a single one is impressive. It stands in stark contrast to Russian allegations that surfaced again on April 29, when an Interfax story cited Kremlin sources as alleging the presence of 2,500 Georgian forces in the areas adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That same story suggested that active fortification works were underway, which may be a reference to the Georgians' new trenches and other positions. The use of the EUMM's (as well as the OSCE's and UNOMIG's) judgments about these developments will help ensure that such wild allegations do not gain currency through the sheer force of repetition. The EUMM's closing sentence, which proposes an

TBILISI 00000841 002 OF 002

arrangement similar to the MOU for the other side of the boundaries, will help put the burden of avoiding an escalation of tensions back on the other parties. Ensuring that these objective voices are not drowned out will be especially important in the runup to the NATO exercise, beginning May 6, and the May 18-19 Geneva talks.

THE STATEMENTS

¶5. (U) Begin text of the April 28 EUMM statement.

EUMM satisfied with the compliance of the Georgian Ministry of Defense with restrictions on military movements

After three months in force, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and the Ministry of Defense of Georgia was automatically prolonged on 26 April for another three months. None of the sides used its right to terminate the agreement.

The Memorandum of Understanding stipulates certain restrictions on the movements of the Georgian armed forces in the vicinity of the administrative boundary lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as giving advance information of movements to EUMM.

EUMM is very satisfied with the compliance of the Georgian authorities with the Memorandum of Understanding. EUMM has followed up all allegations of infringements of the Memorandum of Understanding, but was not able to substantiate any of them. The Georgian Ministry of Defense has provided the necessary transparency to ensure that our monitors can fulfill their duties under these arrangements.

EUMM recognizes that this is a unilateral confidence building measure by Georgia. Security in the post conflict region could be further enhanced if similar arrangements could be agreed on the other side of the administrative boundary lines.

End text.

¶6. (U) Begin text of the April 28 MOD statement.

Agreement on Provisional Arrangement for the Exchange of Information between the Ministry of Defense of Georgia and

EUMM was prolonged

The Agreement on "Provisional Arrangement for the Exchange of Information" between the Ministry of Defense of Georgia and the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) has been automatically prolonged for another three months.

The Ministry of Defense of Georgia and European Union Monitoring Mission signed the document on January 26, 2009. The document has been based on the EU-mediated Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement. The document sets out the effective mechanisms of information exchange and interaction between Defense Ministry of Georgia and EUMM with a view to further strengthening the confidence and security between the sides. It should be mentioned, that since the date of signature, the Parties to the Agreement have been faithfully fulfilling the commitments under the Agreement.

The Ministry of Defense of Georgia expresses its high willingness for further close collaboration with EUMM and will provide the necessary support to ensure that the Mission's monitors carry out their duties and obligations duly mandated to them.

There follows a reference to the EUMM statement. End text.
TEFFT